

IN SYMPATHY, BUT ONLY FOR A LITTLE LONGER

everyone's
doing their job
but annie
and she can't
because she doesn't
feel up to it
and gets claustrophobia
she's thirsty
she has to go wee wee
she feels fat
she's tired
she's horny
she can't face people
without slipping into them
)like a toe checking
water temperature
she feels unsafe
she drinks and gets sick
she sweats easily
she doesn't like her face
she needs to be alone
97% of the time
we all keep telling annie
we understand
because we want her to feel
loved
and we hope she gets well soon
because she is
a pain in the ass

ann menebroker

HANSELS TUNE

how was it
you loved
your green-eyed boy
mr. and mrs. death
my parents

old before our time runs out
on any feeling worthy of th name
remember me defiance

undog my faithful heels
i soar from speeding

whose eyes r "zackly" like mine
grandma gray
used to say i'd say

what
brand of baloney
r u serving this week
or still clawing at th moon

charles potts

SODBUSTERS IN THE NIGHT

for my great-grandparents

that city of earth
squeezed out with your hands
will remain when you're gone
or till the wind comes

tickleweed
grows from the walls
of your sod house
even after sun has baked them gray
and moss on your roof has blackened

at night the deadly plains
shake the furrows of your sleep

your shotgun by the door
clicks out a coyote's heartbeat

a dozen or so children
stop the corners
of your one-room lives

galen green

from
Letter One, **Dear Esther:**

(Adaptations of the Civil War
letters of George H. Cadman)

3)
At Odin we had to
lie over a few hours.
We left for Columbus
about midnight, arrived
there at five in the morning.

This
is the cursedest,
the dirtiest,
the most miserable,
God-forsaken
looking
place in existence.

I expect it's
a whole heap
worse than it looks.

We stayed here and suffered
till six the next morning,
when we were off again;
the Ohio and Mobile Railway
couldn't carry us away
any too quickly for me.

tom montag

CONVENTIONAL POEM

I am a pool, a pond, a lake,
A still water. Primeval mud
That waits
For you. A red sea your stick
Stirs up. The cloudy mud
That blooms and blossoms,
The settling silt.
The clam shell empty,
After you
Opening with the pearl.
So still until
You come. The sea skate
Undulate
On the ocean floor.
Aquatic minotaurs
Unravelling my maze.
White sea-weed,
Sea-stirred ferns.
Stone who sends your ripples
To the utmost shore.
Quenching the water's thirst.

susan fromberg schaeffer

TO YOU

My love for you
is like the half-eaten can of tuna
on my refrigerator shelf.
Over-looked and pushed aside,
emerging months later
to fill the room.

joann young

from **The Planet With Blue Skies**

She is there, flawed as the born one.
She has that accuracy and raw emergence that
leads to a full sky as surely as that first
star on the Belt blossoms by night into the
full Orion, armed, and if he is Set, Lepus
the Hare is his boat. All that plus the
constellations we don't even see. I await
all that as you have awaited it, with surety
and joy.

What you say is true: when I look I
see you smiling back at me. So I look.

richard grossinger

HINDU PRAYER

Bless the holy men who understand the animals.
They shall lead charmed lives when they are flies.

elizabeth spires

ONE SMALL STEP

The inherent possibilities
in an unopened can
of spinach!

A whole universe in
a 15 ounce can.

An unexplored vista
of green leaves
water &
salt.

But forgive me
if I leave it for
the Neil Armstrongs
of the world.

It's one thing
to admire it romantically
from afar.
And it's another
to step in it.

peter payack

WARMING UP

Eager to please,
you bare your breast
and offer it,
a small round mirror.
Eager to see myself,
I see instead
a glass doorknob
jewelled with
fibers of light,
your nipple floating
like a closed eye.
When I tell you this
you take notes
as if for a poem.

roger pfingston

MR. HINMAN'S WIFE

has been a nuisance for years
always overcooking

the eggs. Now she resembles
a particle of yellow dust

no one can catch. She won't
answer the phone or visit

old friends. She has become
a bumble bee, one of the hive

humming a tune over the petunias.
Someday Mr. Hinman will hear

a tiny motor rumbling, feel
a twinge in his arm. A small

raised spot will itch fiercely.
It will keep him from forgetting

her, when he drinks his coffee,
when he reads the *Times*.

phyllis janowitz

THE TOMORROW SHOW

When Tom Snyder asked the marriage counselor
if her husband's infidelity was the cause of her divorce,
she said, "Oh, no, the causes were much deeper;
that was just a symptom."

Which didn't ring quite true to me,
because my marriages have always broken up
without any cause at all,

just a proliferation of symptoms.

gerald locklin

THE PAIN OF DANCE

(for Cin)

now i
old mermaid in the stages of my dance
look for the mortal whom i loved
when my hair was green
and he was shore to my lament

i submitted
to the spell that gave me legs
vowing yes
i loved enough for pain

and so i danced till i grew old
(like this)
my legs as used to agony as i to love

i do not care for sea-sound now
or watch the limp of late birds
through the air

i make my bones obey
i dance before the mirror
while the other scarves and costumes
float around me like true smiles

i dance before the mirror
dressed in green
gold cymbals on my fingers
never thinking past the music now
for what it means

joyce odam

IF THIS WERE RAGTIME

On the lawn of her dream
D. H. Lawrence stands
sad as a maypole

dressed in a white palisades suit

buttoning up
his banjo eyes.

paul grillo

Roxy

he squeezed into one of those narrow boxes in which one becomes so acutely an uncomfortable, tangly and tingly especially hard on his lower extremities strictly adhering to the side of her silky knee while lightly against his shoulder the corner of the between the something and the delight of silky sparks coursing through his body.

"Such a huge theater," he muttered,

ken saville

THE VISIONARY

You spoke of death so soon after
we met, calmly, after a fashion;
its constant anticipation of reaching
an end in some clouded manner,
maybe a motorcycle off a Wisconsin back road.
I promised to be there, give my hand
to you, taking us someplace cold
we'd never been, before they dragged me off
and let me carry your cremated
remains in a shoebox.

steve sher

FRIDAY

rain on the tin roof

skip breakfast

wet green thru
diamond glass

just lie and listen

as if you could
choose not to

lyn lifshin

CONCRETE IN THE RAIN

The white clouds look at me
from the tracks of my shoes.

P'ei Ti

The rain that falls is slow.
Ripples in thin puddles
spread like waves
reaching further each time
as the tide from the sky comes in.

Even the grey sidewalk
has turned new colors this morning.

The wind caught between the doors
of the college library
hums a song about pine trees.

Everything that touches you
becomes your life.

joseph bruchac

BLAZE

Crocuses marching down the March winds
White purple gold
I come from the crocuses
To the five-alarm fire
The burning pier
All eyes leap with the black wrapped flames
But I can't see the blaze
For the grass-leaved crocuses
Especially the saffron-centered whites

emilie glen

ORPHAN

Other sons had to fly home to meet
their mothers in cold airports where
they stood covered with tears like
pearls on a show saddle.

Or they had to walk down halls straight
and white as bones, then watch their
fathers wired like homemade bombs.

Other sons could not even shave
without seeing the hair or nose
or chin that was not really
theirs.

The orphan saw only himself in the
morning. He had no responsibilities
but to carry his body through the
streets as if it were the Pope's.

He loved his parents for dying
and leaving him
alone.

ronald koertge

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